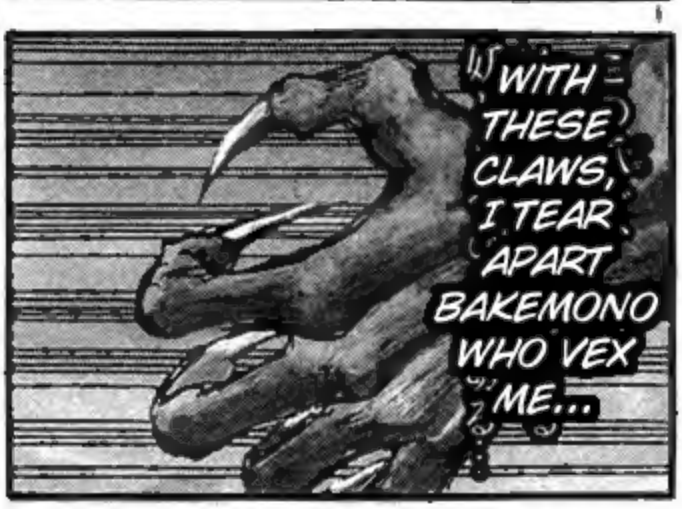
I WALK ALONE ...

DARKNESS... IN ABSOLUTE DARKNESS...

DAWN BREAKING ON ETERNAL NIGHT

THE CAPITAL WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND IN A GREAT BATTLE. BUT THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
IT WAS THE REIGN OF THE NINTH ASHIKAGA SHOGUN.



えいやれいめい
永夜黎明
I MET HIM!

UNTIL

UNTIL THEN, I HAD BEEN INVINCIBLE, NO MATTER WHAT BAKEMONO I FOUGHT...
BUT... THREE NIGHTS BEFORE, I HAD SUDDENLY COME FACE TO FACE WITH A SAMURAI WHO WIELDED A STRANGE SPEAR...
AND THIS ONE ...
WAS NOT GOING DOWN SO EASILY ...
I'M SO SCARED...! I JUST WANT THIS TO BE OVER QUICKLY...!
WAA AAA HH!

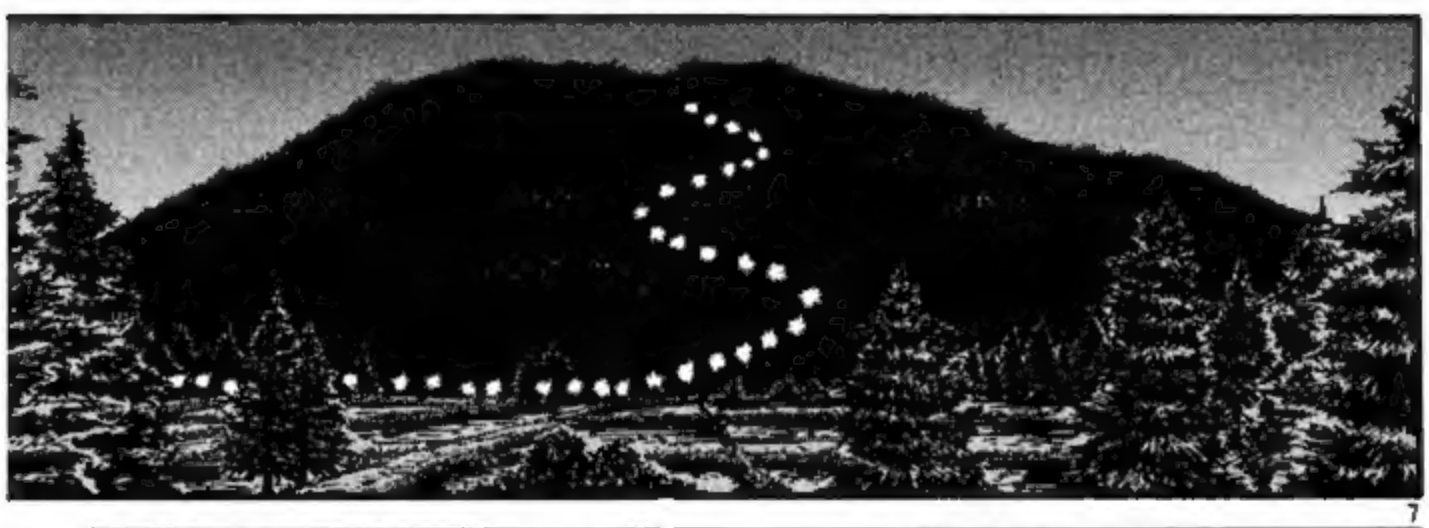
HIIII...!
What you're saying... doesn't match what you're doing!
KUH...
I DON'T! YOU'RE ABSURDLY POWERFUL ...!
EEEP!
IT'S LIKE YOU DON'T EVEN WANT TO DO THIS!
SO WHAT THE HELL'S YOUR PROBLEM ?!
WITH ALL OF THAT DEMONIC POWER POURING OUTTA YOUR SPEAR, AND THOSE SLASHING ATTACKS OF YOURS... YOU'RE THE STRONGEST HUMAN I'VE EVER FOUGHT!

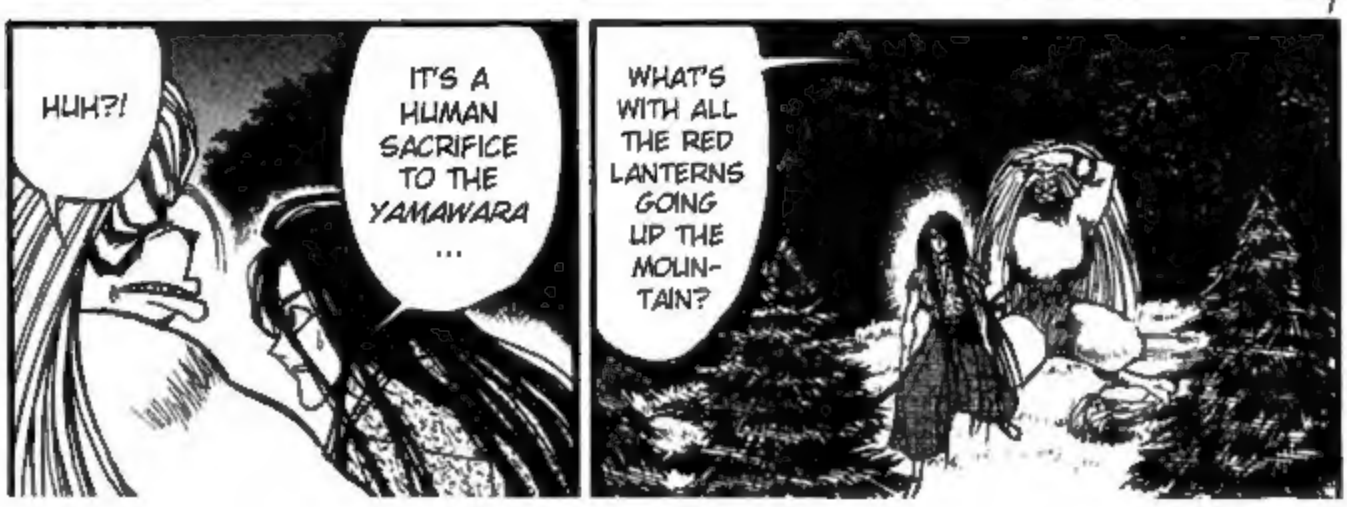
SO I HAVE TO USE THIS BEAST SPEAR ...
TO GET RID OF YOU...!
BUT YOU'RE A TENMA WHOSE FAME EXTENDS ALL THE WAY TO THE CAPITAL! YOU EAT PEOPLE AND PERFORM ALL KINDS OF EVIL DEEDS!
TRUTH BE TOLD, I'D RATHER THROW THIS SPEAR AWAY!

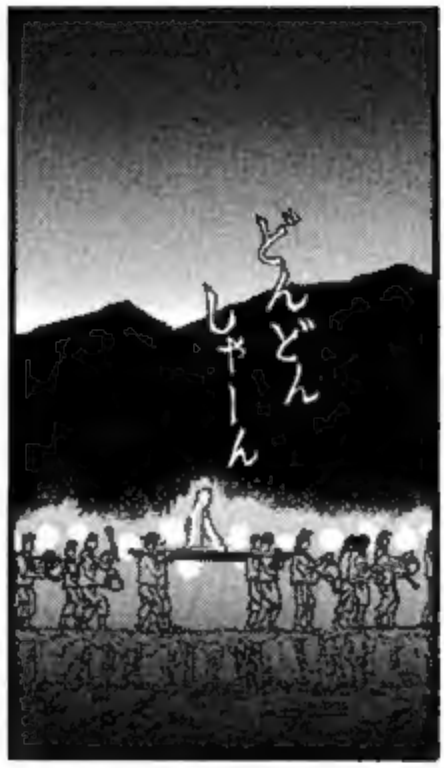
OKAY, LET'S GET SERIOUS!
I'VE LONG WANTED TO FIGHT SUCH A THING!
KUKUKU... SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
THE BEAST SPEAR ?!
IT'S POWERED BY TEARING OUT A PERSON'S SOUL... A SPIRIT SPEAR THAT CLEAVES DEMONS AND SLICES ON! ...
THAT'S WELL-KNOWN AMONG BAKE-MONO ...

HE'S NOT FOLLOWING ...
ガク
FOLLOW ME AND I'LL KILL YOU!
ドヒュ

WHAT'RE YOU GAWKING AT?!
YOU JACKASS! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING ME! IF I TRY TO ESCAPE, THEN YOU—

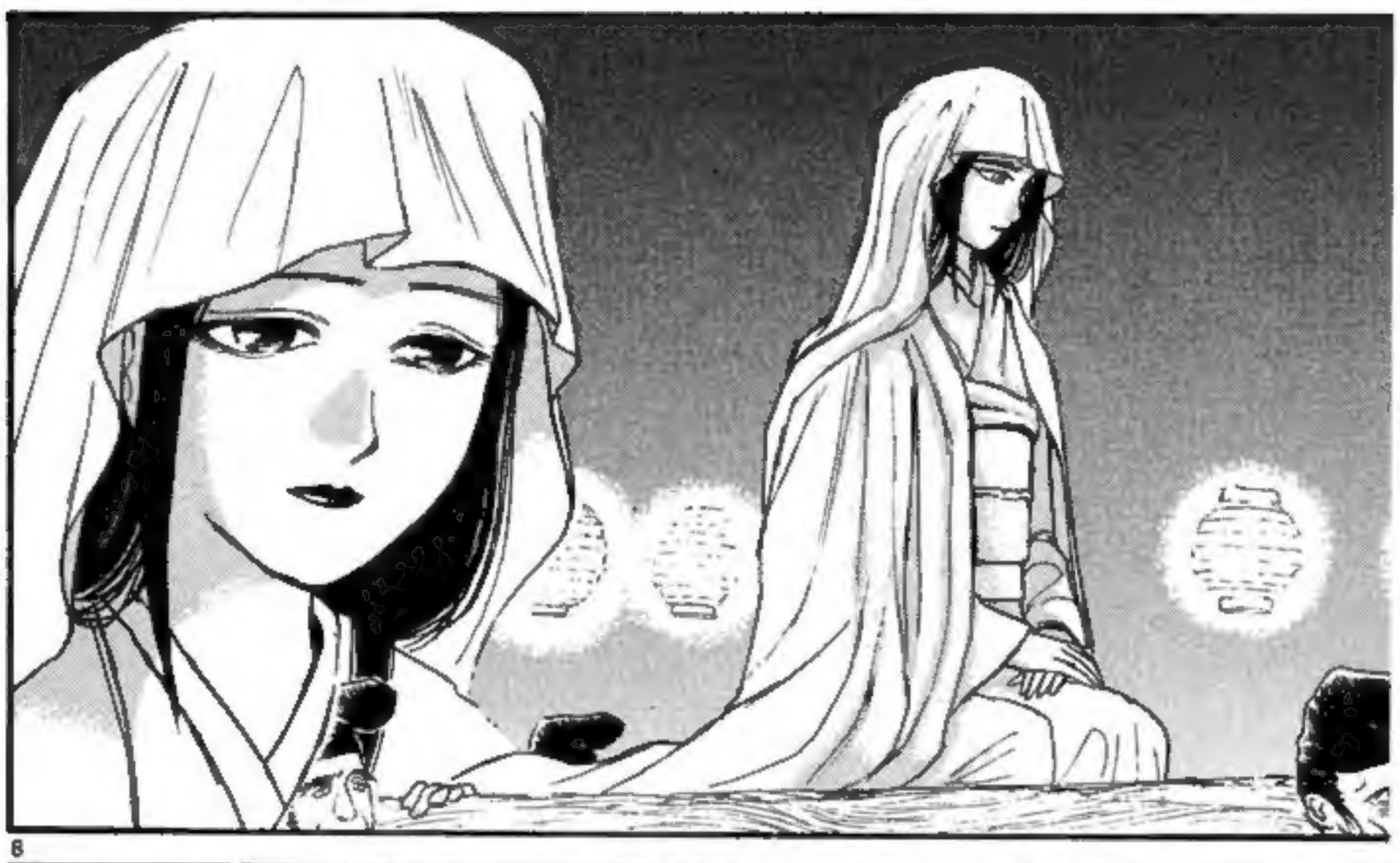



HUH?!
IT'S A HUMAN SACRIFICE TO THE YAMAWARA ...
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE RED LANTERNS GOING UP THE MOUNTAIN?


どんどん
しゃーん

どんどん
しゃーん
どんどん
しゃーん

!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THAT! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT HERE!



WHAT NOW?!

MISAO ...!

AH... AAAH...!

YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF ME!
MISAO ...!

COME ON!

WHO THE HELL'S MISAO?! WHAT'S THAT PROCESSION FOR?!
AHH, JEEZ!!

JUST AS LONG AS MISAO IS ALL RIGHT ...!
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME!

MISAO IS THE DAUGHTER OF THE VILLAGE HEADMAN!
IT'S A PROCESSION TO THE MOUNTAIN TEMPLE THAT HAPPENS EVERY 10 YEARS. THEY'RE GOING TO PERFORM A HUMAN SACRIFICE.

I'M FROM A NEARBY VILLAGE ...
I WAS BORN THE SON OF A TENANT FARMER ...
CALLED ONZE.
I WAS SLOW AT EVERY-THING...
AND TIMID ON TOP OF IT ...
I WAS MADE FUN OF BY THE OTHER CHILDREN MY AGE...
AND THEY WOULD TORMENT ME WHENEVER I WAS ALONE.
COME NOW, SOUTAROU. HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO CRY?
BUT... MISAO WAS DIFFERENT. SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THE HEADMAN...
AND SHE WAS THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN THE WHOLE VILLAGE ...
FOR A GIRL LIKE THAT ...
TO BE SO KIND TO A TWERP LIKE ME...
I DON'T HAVE ANY GUTS... I CAN'T EVEN STOP THEM FROM ALL THROWING ROCKS AT ME...

どき
ちゃぷ
I'M A FOOL.
I'LL PROBABLY ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS... FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE...
BUT YOU'RE GOOD AT PLAYING THE REED PIPE.
WHEN YOU PLAY THE REED PIPE...
I DO SO ENJOY LISTENING ...
THAT'S REASON ENOUGH FOR YOU TO KEEP LIVING.
BEING GOOD AT THE REED PIPE WON'T MEAN MUCH IN BATTLE.
YOU WANT TO BE A SAMURAI, SOUTA-ROU?
EVERYONE WANTS TO BECOME A SAMURAI... SO... I SHOULD TOO...
I SHOULD ...
ピシャ

AH—
MISAO ...
I...
LIKE YOU BETTER WHEN YOU PLAY THE REED PIPE ...
SOU-TAROU.

I WANTED TO BECOME A MAN WHO WAS WORTHY...
YES ...
SO THEN YOU BECAME A SAMURAI.
KEH. WHAT A BORING STORY.

GUTS AND FECES SCATTERED EVERYWHERE— THAT'S WHAT WAR IS...
SEVERED HEADS AND EARS AND NOSES FLYING BY...

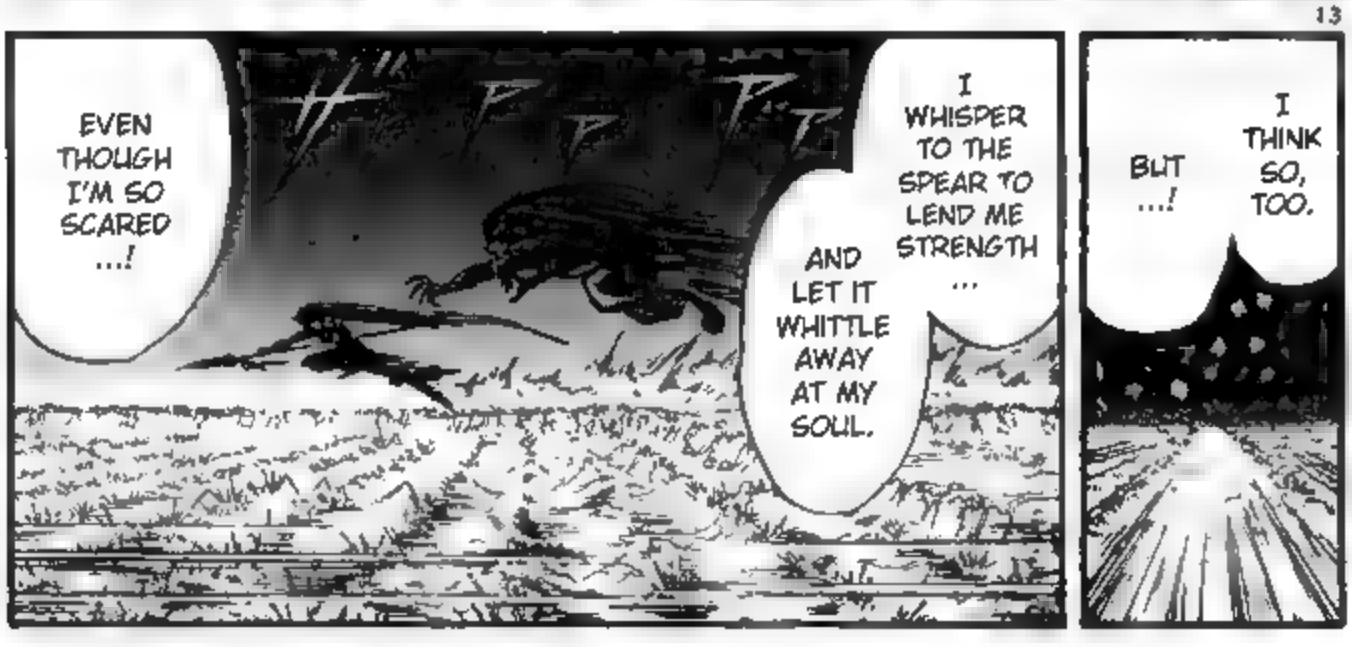
OF MISAO, THE FINEST GIRL IN THE VILLAGE.

I WAS SCARED ...
BUT ...

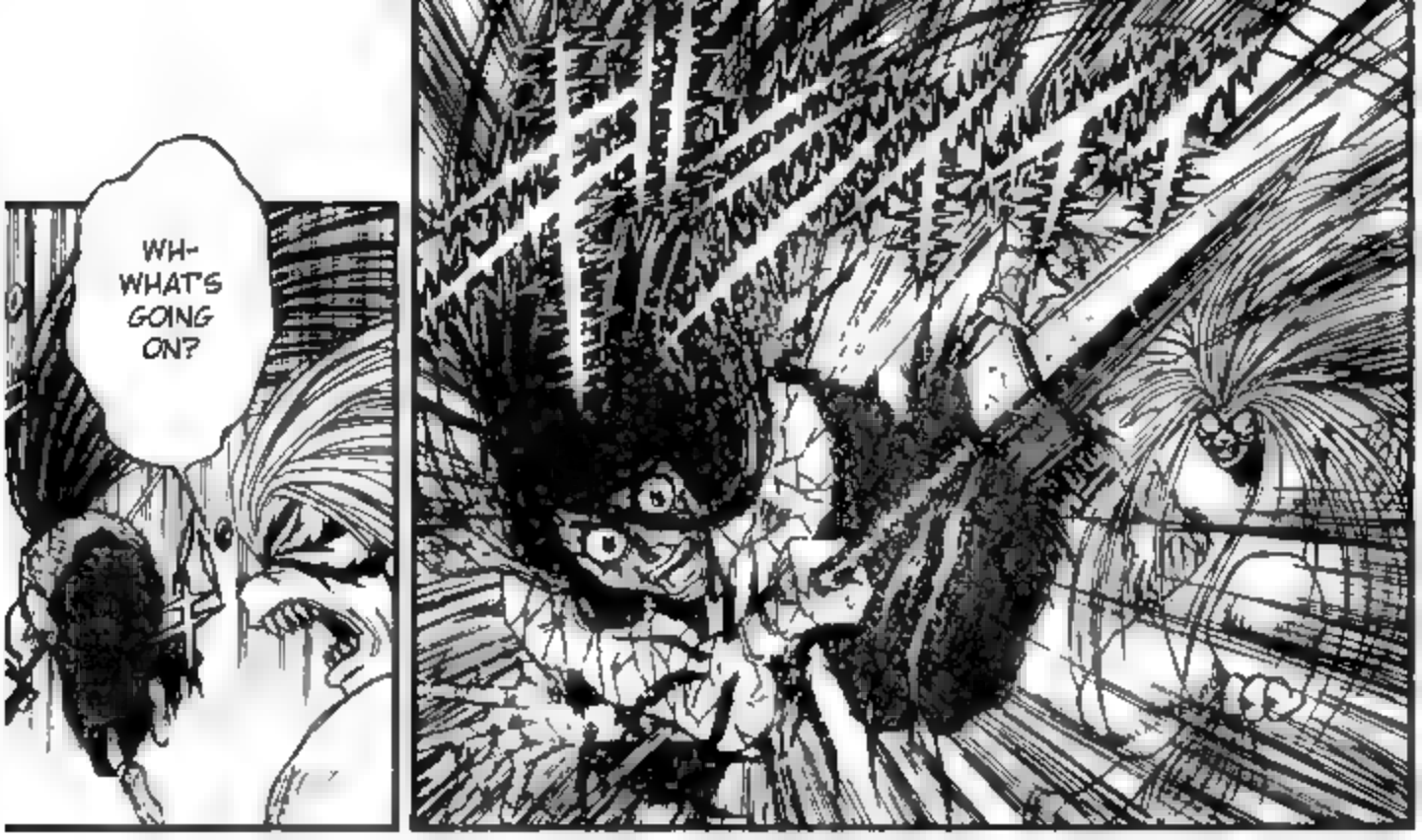
MET WITH THE BEAST SPEAR ...
WHEN I FIRST ...
IT'S STRANGE TO THINK THAT THAT WAS THE MOMENT ...
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, I LOST SIGHT OF MY COMRADES ...
I REALLY WAS GUTLESS AFTER ALL ...
AND AFRAID ...
HELP-LESS ...!

KEH! SOMEONE AS PITIFUL AS YOU, SAVING PEOPLE [redacted] BAKEMONO?! YOU'RE BITING OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW!
EVER SINCE THEN... I'VE USED THE [redacted] TO EXORCISE BAKEMONO.

13


EVEN THOUGH I'M SO SCARED ...!
I WHISPER TO THE SPEAR TO LEND ME STRENGTH ...
AND LET IT WHITTLE AWAY AT MY SOUL.
BUT ...!
I THINK SO, TOO.

YES, IT IS! IT'S LONELY ...!
I DON'T GET IT. BEING BY YOURSELF AIN'T THAT BAD...
HEH!
IT'S BETTER THAN BEING ...
BY MY-SELF.
PEOPLE CAN'T LIVE ON THEIR OWN.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, BAKEMONO?
I KNEW I COULD LIVE ON, AS LONG AS IT WAS WITH MISAO.
WHEN SHE SAID THAT, I FELT SO HAPPY I COULD CRY.
WHEN YOU PLAY THE REED PIPE... I DO SO ENJOY LISTENING. THAT'S REASON ENOUGH FOR YOU TO KEEP LIVING.
14
...!
.....
KEH! SO THEN, WHY AREN'T YOU BACK AT THAT VILLAGE NOW?
YOU BECAME A SAMURAI, DIDN'T YOU?


WH-
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

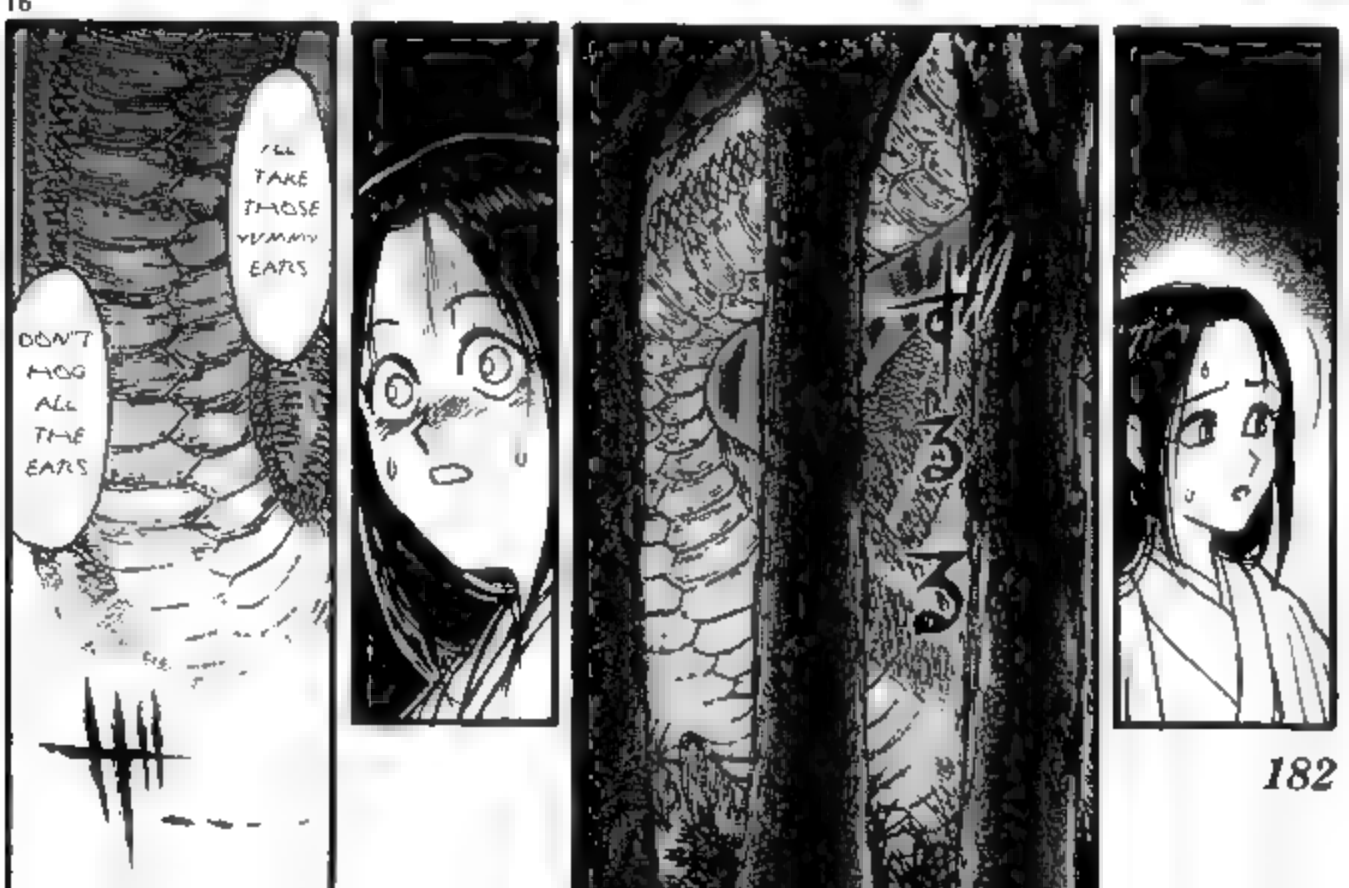
MISAO
...
HOW
STUPID!
HUH!
AND YOU'RE
STILL GONNA
SAVE THAT
GIRL?

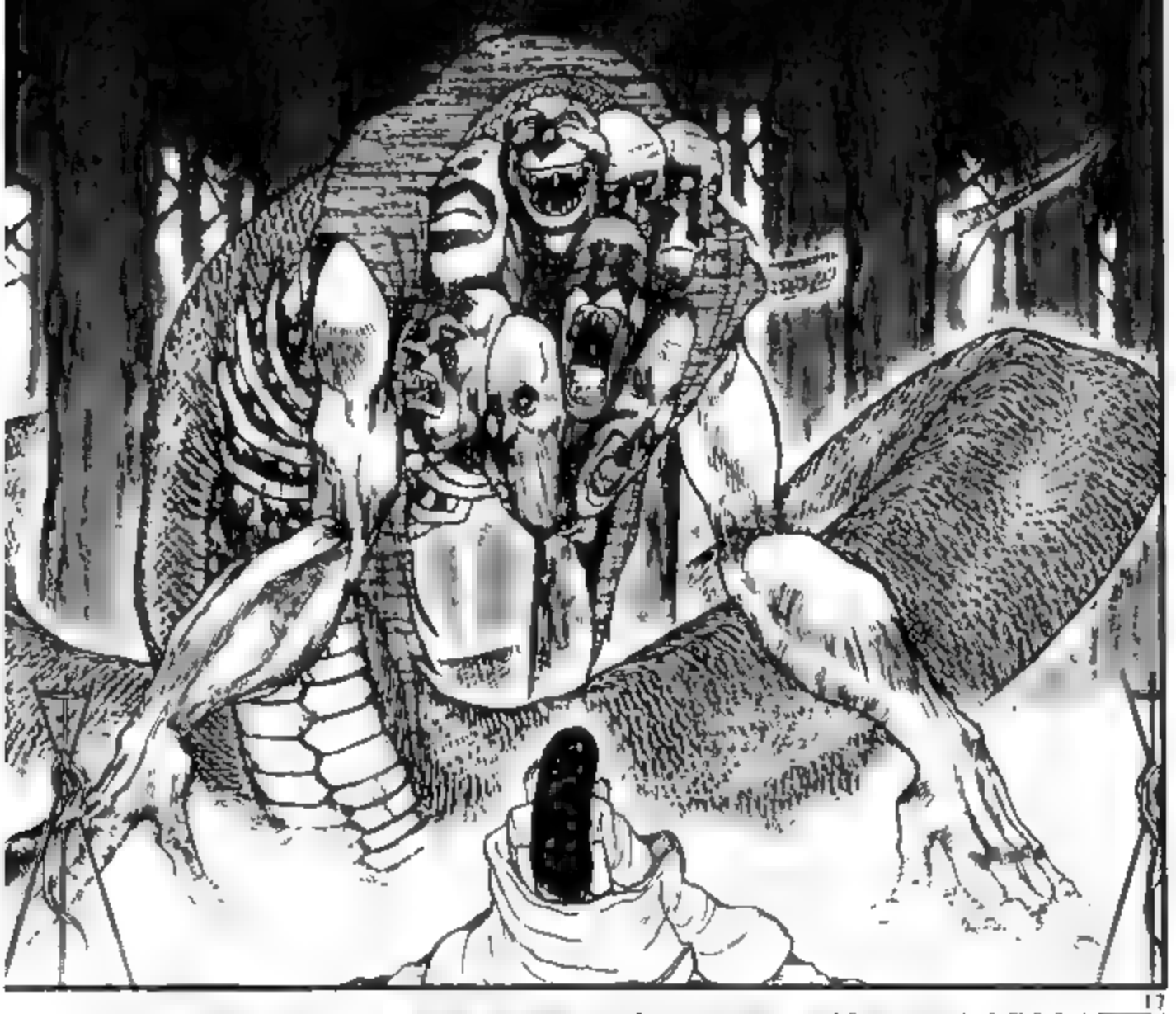
THE
ONE WHO
WIELDS IT
SHALL LOSE
HIS SOUL...
AND BECOME
LIKE UNTO A
BEAST...
IF... THE
SPEAR IS
USED...
TOO MUCH
...

15

.....
.....

16





AAAHH!

I'LL TAKE THE YUMMY ARMS
I'LL TAKE THE YUMMY LEGS
GIVE ME THE EYESSSS
カカカ

WAAH ...
LET GO OF MISAO.
STOP!

WHAT WAS THAT, HUMAAAN?
WAAAAH! I'M REALLY SCARED!
19
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! WHY DON'T YOU USE THE SPEAR?!
IT'S GOT MISAO ...
BUT... MISAO...

FOOL! WHAT CAN YOU DO AGAINST KOKO-NOTSU 7!
MISAO'S GOING TO DIE ...!
NO...! MISAO!!
HURRY UP AND FIGHT BACK! YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!
I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE ...!
MISAO CAN'T DIE...!
BECAUSE I KNEW SOMEWHERE IN THIS WORLD, MISAO WAS ALIVE...!
I KEPT LIVING ALL THIS TIME, EVEN WHEN I WANTED TO DIE ...

BE SILENT ...!
SOME BAKEMONO FROM NOWHERE, COMING TO MY MOUNTAIN ...!
YOU ...!
HEY!

I'M TRYING TO TALK HERE.

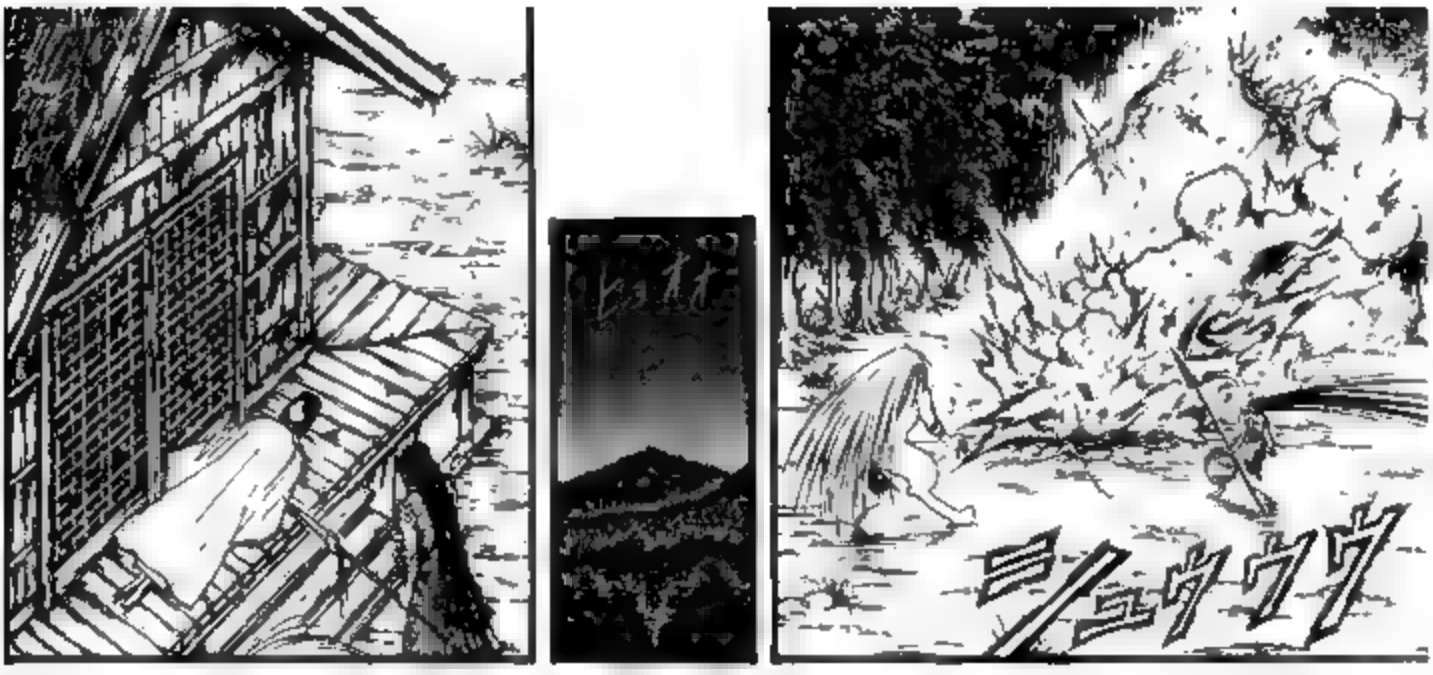
MISAO! THANK GOOD-NESS!

I-IT'S NAGA-TOBI-MARU ...!

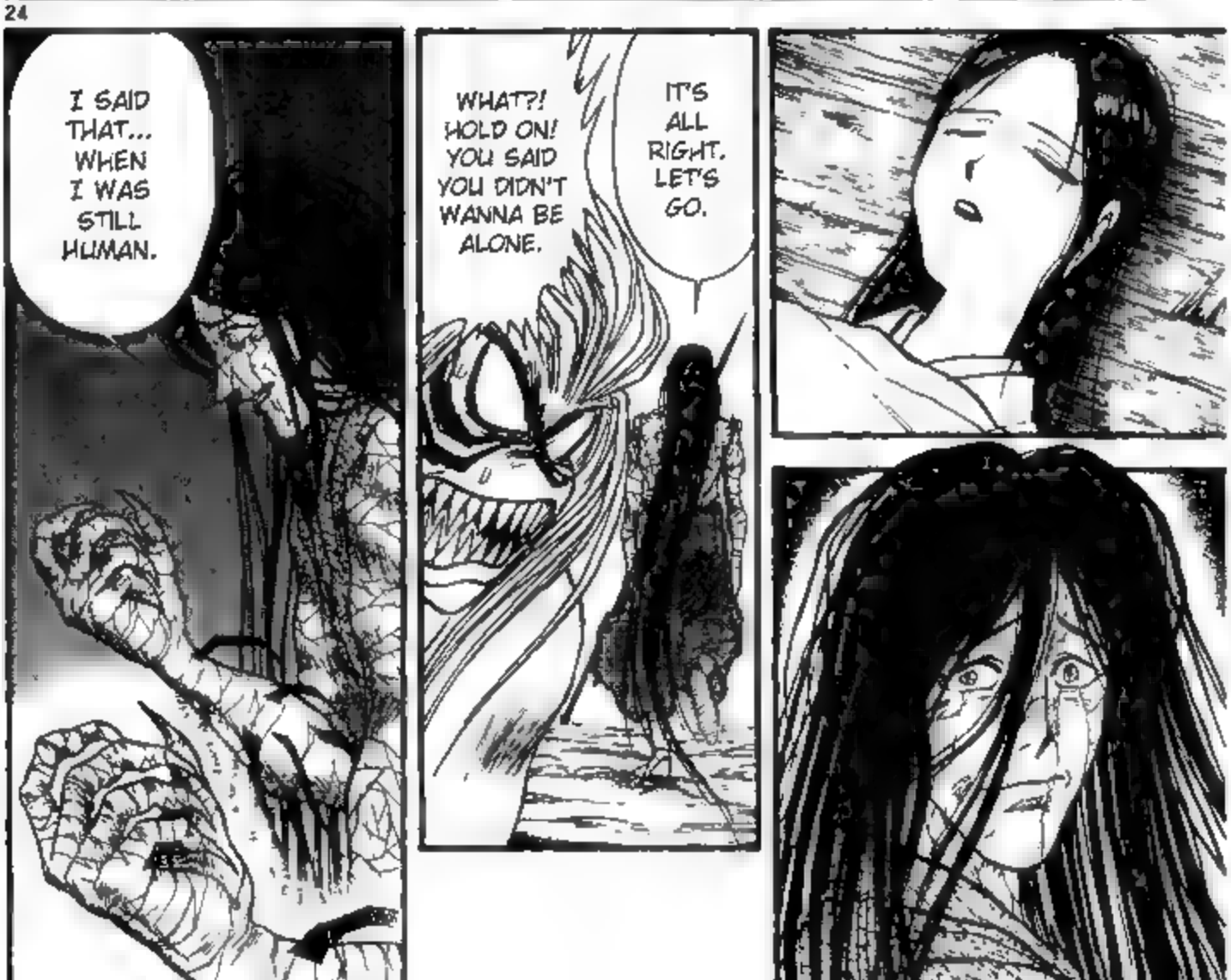
OH, COME ON! THIS GUY'S PISSING ME OFF!

AND I'M JUST ...
!
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE! ALWAYS!
WHO CARES ABOUT BEING ALONE ?!
WHAT ARE THESE FACES I'M SEEING SUDDENLY...!?
HUH ...?

DAMN IT...
CURSE YOUUU, NAGA-TOBI-MARU...!
DAMMIT... MY CHEST HURTS...!



WHAT ABOUT THE WOMAN?
LET'S CONTINUE OUR FIGHT.
WELL ...
I UNDER-STAND.
THAT GUY WAS JUST GETTING TOO BIG FOR HIS BRITCHES.
QUIT DRONING ON! I DIDN'T DO THAT TO HELP YOU OUT.


I SAID THAT... WHEN I WAS STILL HUMAN.
WHAT?! HOLD ON! YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANNA BE ALONE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO.

AND THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU...?

A BEAST.
MISAO CAN'T LIVE WITH...

I'M SO LONELY BY MYSELF...!
NO, IT'S NOT OKAY!

.....

WE CAME TO SAVE YOU!

HEY, MISAO!

YOUR FIANCE GOHEE IS HERE TOO!

WITH NOBODY TO TALK TO, NOBODY TO ANSWER ME...!
I DON'T WANNA BE A BEAST ...!

SOU-
TAROU!
.....
SOU-
TA-
ROU!
SHOW
ME
YOUR
FACE!
I'VE
NEVER
FORGOTTEN
YOU! NOT
FOR A
SINGLE
DAY!
YOU'RE
SOUTAROU,
AREN'T
YOU?

SOUTAROU
...!

ALL RIGHT, IF YOU INSIST!
LET'S FIGHT, BAKE-MONO!
WAAAH! FIGHT ME!
YOU... DIDN'T TRY TO AVOID MY LAST STRIKE.
WHA ... WHY ...

I REMEM-BERED ...
I JUST SCREWED UP.
EVEN SOMEONE LIKE ME CAN BE LIKE YOU, AT TIMES ...
I'M SORRY ...
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU STOPPED CHANGING INTO A BEAST.
THAT WAS A GOOD TIME FOR YOU TO LET GO OF THE BEAST SPEAR.
STRETCHED OUT AND CAME UP BEHIND MY BACK...
ACTUALLY, WHEN YOUR SPEAR ...
FIGHTING WITH YOU FOR FOUR DAYS... IT WASN'T BORING.
HAHAHAHA! DON'T APOLOGIZE.
KEHAHAHA! NO WAY, DUMBASS!
ARE YOU ACTUALLY... A GOOD BAKEMONO?
FOR THINGS TO BE.
I STARTED TO THINK IT WASN'T SUCH A BAD WAY...

永夜黎明

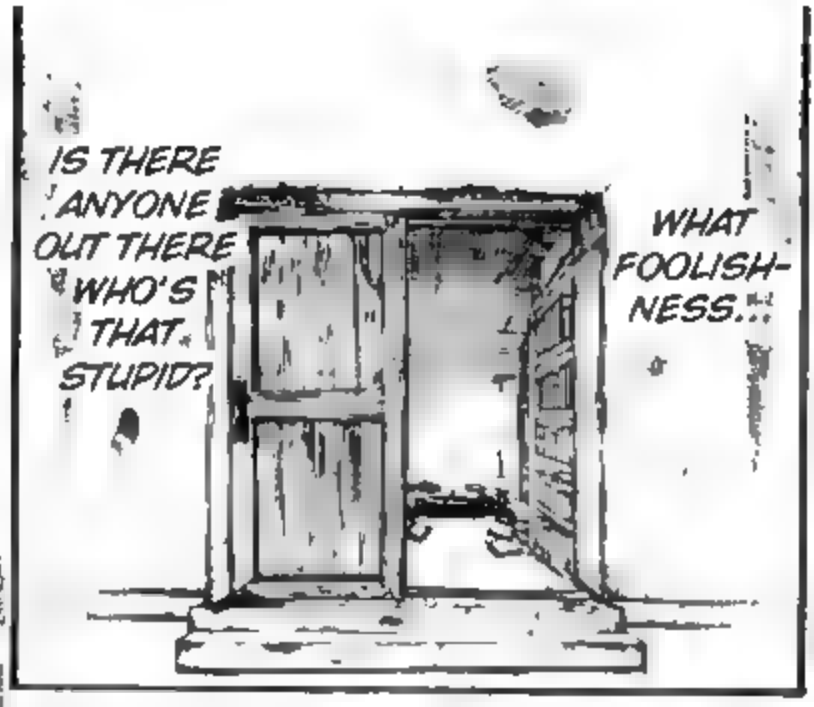
IT MIGHT BE TEN YEARS... OR MAYBE A HUNDRED ...
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS WAIT.
IN... TIME?
KEH! I'LL ESCAPE THIS CRAPPY SPEAR...
IN TIME.

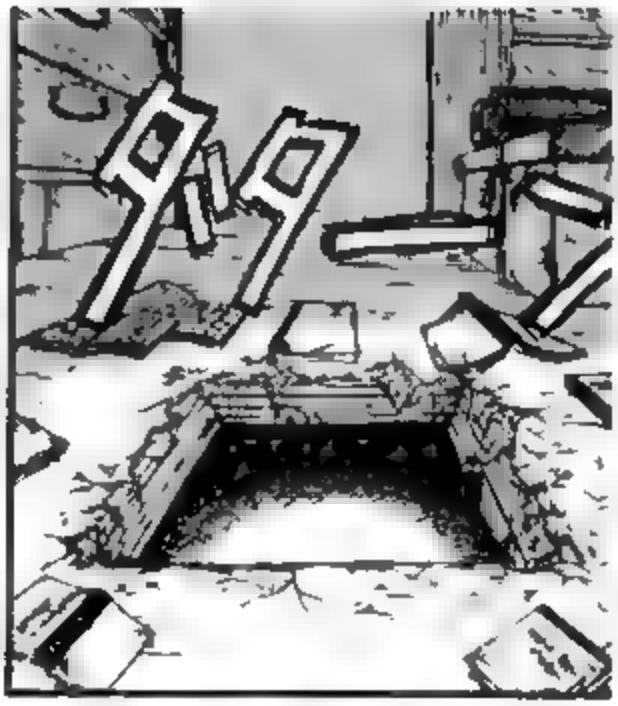
BE A LITTLE LONELY ...
IT'LL JUST ...

...IT'S AWFULLY QUIET...
AM I STILL... ALONE...?

WHAT WAS IT...?
ピ=
...SAID SOMETHING BEFORE HE LEFT.
THAT SAMURAI
TWO HUNDRED? THREE HUNDRED?
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN?

WHAT THAT GUY SAID ... WAS ...
RIGHT... I RE-MEMBER NOW...!!
SOMEONE WHO'LL WATCH YOUR BACK.
SOMEDAY, SOMEONE WILL COME ALONG...





〈掲載・週刊少年サンデー平成8年12月増刊号〉

おしまいに

本屋さんに入ってまんがのコーナーに参りますと、めまいを覚えるものであります。こんなにたくさんのまんががある！　いろいろな出版社から、おびただしい数のまんが家が、様々なジャンルのまんがを生みだしています。

いったい、どれを読んだらいいのかわからない。手をのばせもせず、副腎からアドレナリンがただただ分泌し、おろおろとしてしまうのです。その中から、自分のまんがを手にしてくださる方は、本当にありがたいことだと思います。あんなに多くのまんがの中から!!!

外伝の最後にスペースをとって、さて『うしおととら』についてふり返ろうかと思ったのですが、元来が記憶力がないので「ふり返れない！」。それでは、解説でも！　と思えど、「半狂乱でやってきたから、よくわからない！」（それにちょっと、かっこ悪いですしね。）結局、ここで言えることは、先の「ありがたいなあ」ということになってしまうのでした。

自分のまんがを買ってくださった方、立ち読み、回し読みでもいい、読んでくださった方、そして感想（もちろん、きっついのもありましたが）や、はげましのお手紙をくださった方すべてが、自分が、この『うしおととら』を描き切れた原動力でありました。

大好きな武者小路実篤先生の詩集に、長い廊下を力をいれて歩いてみたいというのがあります。反響のあるところを「どしん　どしん」と。

自分にとって、長い廊下は読者の皆さんでありました。その廊下の中で自分は生かされ、皆さんからの「どしん　どしん」という反応をききながら、好き勝手に、うしおやとら達を暴れさせることができました。

確かに作者としては、反省点は無数にあります。（全巻通して読みにくくてねえ…すいません）しかし、『うしおととら』について、親であるところの自分が、ほんの少しだけ胸を張って言えるところがあるとすれば、「描き残したところはありません」ということでございます。自分は、第一巻に書きましたとおり、面白いと思ったものは残らず、本作にぶちこみました。それが、それだけが、長い間、皆さんという廊下を歩かせていただいたまんが家が、誓って言えることでございます。

ありがとうございました。

『うしおととら』は本巻をもちまして完結でございます。その後のお話を、自分は持っておりません。ただひとつ、しかも断固として言えることは、「登場人物は全員幸せになりました。」それに沿って、皆さんが各自、各登場人物のその後を想像していただけたら、

本当に嬉しいのでございます。あ、いや、それは贅沢というものだぞ。

うーん。うーん。……。ま、面白かったら、それでいいや!!　なのでございます。

最後になりましたが、長い間、短気で、人間の小せえ（魂がミクロマンという言い方は図星だよ。片山くん）自分に付き合って、喜んで、きつい仕事の嵐を乗り切ってくれたアシスタントのみんなと、歴代の担当編集の方々に、厚く感謝の意を表したいと思います。彼らなしでは、うしおととらは一歩も廊下を歩くことなどできなかったのですから。

では…

とっぴんぱらりのぷう。

藤田和日郎

手紙をくださった方に、本来ならばお返事を書きたいのでありますが、一部の方に出すとなるとほかの方への義理が欠けます。かといって、すべてのお返事を書くことはできません。以上の理由で、本当に申し訳ありませんが、ほとんどの方に返信はしておりません。まことに、あいすみません。

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●雷の舞●　〃

●プレゼント●　〃

●永夜黎明●　〃

●特別感謝●

谷口信行

村枝賢一

高橋留美子

あさりよしとお

青い鳥のお姉さん、おばあさん

そして「廊下」のみなさん！

(順不同敬称略)

うしおととら〈外伝〉

少年サンデーコミックス

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pg 1: The reign of the ninth Ashikaga shogun lasted from 1474 to 1489.

pg 6: A *tenma* (天魔) is a demon that obstructs those seeking enlightenment in Buddhism.

pg 7: A *yamawara* (山童) is a mountain spirit that may be bribed into being helpful to humans.

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